

Results from the 2013 Surveys of Hunter Education Instructors, Resident Hunters, and Montana Households Regarding Youths & Hunting in Montana

Grey color. Results from the Hunter Education Instructor Survey (N=687 respondents; 50% response)

Orange color. Results from the Resident Hunter Survey (N=259 respondents; 35% response)

Blue color. Results from the Montana Household Survey (N=263 respondents; 20% response)

The following hunting regulations apply to youths in Montana:

- All individuals (including youths) who wish to legally hunt any of Montana's game species must have a valid Montana hunting license specific to the game species they wish to hunt. Commonly hunted game species in Montana include: deer, elk, antelope, pheasants, sharp-tailed grouse, Hungarian partridge, turkeys, mountain grouse, ducks, geese, moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, black bears, and wolves.
- Youths are required to show proof of completing a Montana hunter safety and education course or an approved hunter safety course from any other state or province prior to applying for or purchasing a Montana hunting license.
- Youths must be at least 11 years of age to become certified in hunter education in Montana.
- Only youths who have successfully completed hunter education and will turn 12 years of age before January 16 of the license year may purchase or apply for a Montana hunting license.
- Anyone, including youths of any age, can hunt non-game species in Montana year-round without a valid hunting license and the associated requirement of hunter education certification. Commonly hunted non-game species in Montana include: squirrels, rabbits, prairie-dogs, ground squirrels, and coyotes.
- In order to carry or use a firearm for any reason, a youth under 14 years of age must be accompanied by a person having charge or custody of the child, or be under the supervision of a qualified firearms safety instructor or an adult 18 years of age or older who has been authorized by the youth's parent or guardian.

In addition to the above, Montana has special youth ONLY two-day hunting seasons for deer, pheasants, ducks, and geese. And, Montana resident youths (12 to 17 years old) who have successfully completed a hunter education course, and who are purchasing their first ever Montana hunting license, are entitled to receive a Resident Youth Combination Sports License free of charge. The youth combo license, which normally costs \$25, includes Montana's conservation, deer, elk, upland game bird, state lands, and fishing licenses.

1. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements listed below regarding youths and hunting?

Statement:	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Agree
Youths should be required to successfully complete a formal hunter education course before they can legally hunt game in Montana	1.0% 1.6% 2.7%	0.7% 1.6% 1.1%	3.4% 2.4% 3.1%	2.8% 3.9% 6.1%	92.0% 90.6% 87.0%
Parents, guardians, and/or adult mentors can effectively instruct youths about how to hunt safely	20.7% 11.9% 14.0%	25.8% 13.9% 20.2%	32.8% 40.9% 35.4%	11.5% 12.3% 10.1%	9.1% 21.0% 20.2%
Requiring youths to complete a formal hunter education course before they can legally hunt game in Montana is a barrier to youth hunting participation	59.2% 65.9% 61.0%	14.8% 15.1% 19.7%	6.1% 9.9% 4.6%	3.4% 3.2% 3.9%	6.4% 6.0% 10.8%

1. (continued from the previous page)

Statement:	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Agree
Youths who successfully complete a formal hunter education course are likely to be safe hunters	1.0% 1.2% 1.5%	1.2% 2.0% 1.5%	11.6% 21.0% 18.1%	34.7% 34.1% 39.8%	51.5% 41.7% 39.0%
Youths who are instructed to hunt by their parents, guardians, and/or an adult mentor are likely to be safe hunters even if they do not successfully complete a formal hunter education course	21.5% 13.9% 17.3%	37.9% 22.0% 22.0%	30.2% 44.0% 40.2%	7.9% 12.3% 12.6%	2.6% 7.5% 7.9%
In general, youths under the age of 12 are <u>NOT</u> mentally and emotionally mature enough to hunt game in Montana	9.8% 17.5% 12.9%	9.4% 13.5% 9.8%	15.6% 15.1% 13.7%	21.6% 15.9% 21.5%	43.7% 37.8% 42.2%
Parents or guardians know best when their children are ready to hunt	16.9% 11.6% 12.3%	22.9% 12.8% 13.6%	30.4% 25.6% 29.6%	19.5% 30.0% 26.3%	10.4% 20.0% 18.1%
Requiring youths to complete a formal hunter education course before they can legally hunt game in Montana is a barrier to families hunting together	69.0% 60.2% 52.9%	19.9% 23.0% 29.1%	5.3% 7.8% 7.0%	2.1% 2.7% 4.5%	3.6% 6.3% 6.6%
In general, youths under the age of 12 are <u>NOT</u> mentally and emotionally mature enough to handle firearms	8.5% 15.2% 12.3%	12.6% 14.5% 13.2%	24.4% 23.8% 22.2%	22.7% 17.6% 18.1%	31.8% 28.9% 34.2%
The sooner a youth can hunt, the more likely they will want to hunt when they get older	18.3% 16.3% 16.7%	22.4% 13.9% 19.7%	31.2% 34.7% 33.9%	15.3% 16.3% 14.6%	12.9% 18.8% 15.0%
Having a minimum age requirement for youths to legally hunt game in Montana is a barrier to youth hunting participation	57.3% 54.1% 43.8%	23.8% 24.3% 31.4%	9.0% 9.8% 11.2%	5.7% 6.3% 7.4%	4.2% 5.5% 6.2%
In general, youths under the age of 12 are <u>NOT</u> physically capable of handling the rigors of hunting game in Montana	11.7% 20.9% 13.3%	17.7% 17.7% 20.4%	29.7% 28.1% 27.9%	21.5% 15.7% 20.0%	19.4% 17.7% 18.3%
Having a minimum age requirement for youths to legally hunt game in Montana is a barrier to families hunting together	63.0% 56.9% 46.7%	23.5% 24.3% 31.1%	4.9% 9.8% 8.2%	4.6% 3.9% 6.1%	3.9% 5.1% 7.8%
More restrictions placed on youth hunting equals less hunting participation by youths and their families	42.5% 36.7% 36.7%	27.2% 24.7% 25.8%	15.0% 15.9% 17.1%	8.3% 13.9% 10.0%	7.0% 8.8% 10.4%
In general, youths under the age of 12 are <u>NOT</u> physically capable of handling the types of firearms that are typically used to hunt big game in Montana	8.6% 19.8% 11.9%	16.0% 15.5% 15.7%	21.8% 25.4% 25.8%	27.3% 15.9% 20.8%	26.4% 23.4% 25.8%

2. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *"Montana should lower the minimum age requirement for youths to legally hunt game in Montana?"* Currently, only youths who have successfully completed hunter education and will turn 12 years of age before January 16 of the license year can legally hunt game in Montana. (circle only one number below)

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
	66.8%	13.2%	7.1%	5.6%	7.3%	
	56.7%	18.4%	7.5%	7.8%	8.6%	
	63.4%	13.4%	8.5%	7.3%	7.3%	

If you circled a "1" or a "2" above, are there any circumstances (e.g., type of game species hunted, type of firearm, public land versus private land opportunities, etc.) that would change your opinion about youths being allowed to hunt game in Montana before reaching the age of 12?

85.8% 82.9% 85.6% [X] NO
 14.2% 17.1% 14.4% [] YES..... If yes, what circumstances?

Most frequently received comments:

- Limit to small game and birds only (e.g., species that are suited for small caliber rifles and/or small gauge shotguns)
- Only if the youths are required to be accompanied by a certified (e.g., tested/trained) parent, guardian, or adult mentor.
- Only if hunter education is required. Hunter education should be required of all youths before they are allowed to hunt.

Of note, nearly identical responses to this open-ended question were received from the respondents to the hunter education instructor, resident hunter, and Montana household surveys.

If you circled a "4" or "5" above, what do you think should be the minimum age requirement for youths to legally hunt game in Montana?

INSTRUCTORS

Mean = 9 years of age
 Median = 10

No age limit	9.4%
1	1.2%
7	1.2%
8	10.6%
9	9.4%
10	58.8%
11	9.4%

HUNTERS

Mean = 8 years of age
 Median = 10

No age limit	15.0%
7	2.5%
8	15.0%
10	57.5%
11	10.0%

HOUSEHOLDS

Mean = 6 years of age
 Median = 8

No age limit	41.9%
8	12.9%
9	3.2%
10	35.5%
11	6.5%

3. Montana's hunter education program follows standards established by the International Hunter Education Association. By meeting these standards, the Montana hunter education certificate is recognized and honored in all of North America. A student must be at least 11 years old to become certified in hunter education, and classes are a minimum of 12 hours in length. Participants must attend all of the sessions and pass a final exam to become certified and a field course typically completes the program. The program itself comprehensively addresses a wide range of topics ranging from hunter safety and preparedness to appropriate hunter behavior and ethics.

On a scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important), how important do you think it is that youths be required to complete a formal hunter education course (similar to the one described above) before being allowed to legally hunt game in Montana, regardless of what the legal age to hunt game is in Montana? (circle only one number below)

Very Unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
	8.1%	1.6%	1.5%	5.2%	83.6%	-- INSTRUCTORS
	6.7%	1.6%	3.1%	10.2%	78.3%	-- HUNTERS
	3.9%	2.8%	3.5%	10.2%	79.5%	-- HOUSEHOLDS

4. On a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), how satisfied are you with the way in which youth hunting is currently regulated in Montana. Detailed information regarding how youth hunting is regulated in Montana is provided on the first page of this survey. (circle only one number below)

Very Dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Very Satisfied
	2.4%	3.4%	10.5%	30.6%	53.0%	-- INSTRUCTORS
	3.2%	5.9%	15.4%	28.1%	47.4%	-- HUNTERS
	5.7%	2.9%	20.0%	28.6%	42.9%	-- HOUSEHOLDS

Characteristics of survey respondents:

Are you raising any children at the present -or- have you raised any children in the past?

[] NO 14.7% 17.3% 22.8%
 [X] YES 85.3% 82.7% 77.2%

Mean Age	Median Age	Percent Female	Percent Male
53	55	12.7%	87.3% - INSTRUCTORS
52	54	12.8%	87.2% - HUNTERS
53	55	32.2%	67.8% - HOUSEHOLDS